

Stoffer Inspections'

# Insight

Insight from the Area's Leader in Home Inspections

Stoffer  
Inspections, L.C.



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## ALL HOMES

**Every home, regardless of age, should receive a professional inspection prior to the sale. Buyers of new homes who neglect having a thorough inspection do themselves a great disservice – at the risk of thousands of dollars in unseen repairs.**

Builders agree the boom in demand for new homes has created a shortage of skilled experienced craftsmen.

Unfortunately, that leads to hiring unskilled labor to work on some of the newer projects. This makes it necessary for a professional inspection of even the newest homes.

A professional inspection is a win-win situation during a real estate transaction. Also, an inspection provides the potential buyer with an overall evaluation of the condition of the home and its major systems. Also, it turns up the positive aspects of the home's condition and gives the seller a stronger negotiating position.

**Here are some reasons for home inspections at various stages in a home's life:**

### New Homes

Often there are minor repair items found during inspections of new homes. These repairs include incorrectly wired circuits, cracked roof shingles, paint touch-up, and scratches in finished wood. New homes should not show any signs of foundation settling, water intrusion, soil erosion, or improperly functioning appliances or mechanical components.

## Of All Ages Need A Home Inspection!



The best advice is to buy a new home before it's constructed; then hire a home inspector to supervise the progress on the home. The inspector should check the construction at least two times; at the pre-drywall inspection when all rough-ins are complete and during the final inspection upon completion. At the pre-drywall inspection the foundation and rough grading, all framing, and all rough-ins are accessible for observation. Depending on the situation, he may also inspect the various systems as they are installed, including the roof, walls, plumbing, and electrical systems.

### Nearly New Homes (2 to 10 years)

After a short time, there will be routine wear and tear on newly built homes. However, homes 2 to 10 years old should remain structurally and mechanically sound. There will be some foundation settling. The inspector should pay close attention to drainage issues, caulking, painting, and other routine systems. A review of the electrical and mechanical systems should be done at this time to assure proper operating performance.

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## Considering an Expansive Soil Plan?

### In Hot/Dry Climates

- Uneven settlement is caused by moisture loss from around and under the foundation
- Evenly water and plant flower beds next to the foundation
- Install automated sprinkler systems or a drip irrigation system



### Southwest Exposure

- Lack of water on the southwest and excessive moisture on the northeast exposure may result in uneven settlement
- Dry landscaping should be watered more often
- Use mulch to slow down evaporation
- Plant shade trees on the southwest side
- Provide an impermeable ground cover together with an impermeable barrier that is taken down to a depth where moisture content is constant (1-3 feet)

### Trees

- Tree roots may grow under the foundation, drying out the soil, resulting in uneven settlement
- Plant trees at a greater distance than their mature height
- Install a 4-foot root/vertical moisture barrier system near the foundation. Holes that fill with water will attract roots to that direction

## Home On The Web

Here are a few ideas on how to keep a driveway in great shape!



### ➔ Driveway Care

[www.pavexpaving.com/care.htm](http://www.pavexpaving.com/care.htm)

### ➔ Driveway Care II

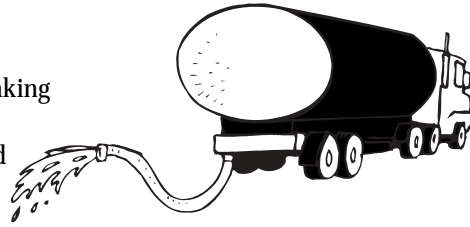
[www.burkholderpaving.com/burkholder/care/](http://www.burkholderpaving.com/burkholder/care/)

# ABOUT RESIDENTIAL Oil Tanks

A home inspector can review the following items, if the tank is visible and accessible:

- **Tank exterior** - should be inspected for leaking seams, excessive rust, and patching.
- **Oil fill and vent piping** - the piping should be leak-free and tight, and it should drain freely into the tank. There may also be a whistle installed that signals the delivery person when the tank is full.
- **Tank plugs and piping** - should be tightly in place.
- **Tank ventilation** - the tank should be properly vented (1.5" to 2" diameter piping) to the outside. During fill, fuel is delivered at a rate of 60 gallons per minute. Improper venting will cause stress on the seams and piping.
- **Vent caps** - should be in place, and capped with a screened, weather-resistant cap to prevent water entry and clogging.
- **Vent location** - is the vent next to the filler? When the vent is properly located, the delivery person can listen to the vent alarm and determine when the tank is full. The alarm prevents overfilling and is recommended for all types of tanks. The alarm is usually mounted at the top of the tank at the vent pipe opening.
- **Fill gauge** - should be installed and tight. Loose gauges can cause spills during tank operations.
- **Tank support** - are the support legs firmly on the ground? Is there other support in place? A support system may be required by local ordinance.
- **Abandoned/Removed tanks** - have all fill pipes on abandoned tanks been completely removed from the building to prevent delivery mistakes or spills? All old tanks should be clearly marked "Abandoned; Do Not Fill."

The homeowner should also keep record of the tank history. Tanks should be kept relatively full in the spring and fall, as the extra weight helps prevent shifting and the related piping leaks. This will also reduce water in the fuel, preventing a loss of heat from condensation. 🏠 🏠 🏠



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## Older Homes (11 to 20 years)

During this period, rotted wood, sealants, roofing shingles, and cosmetic surfaces may need to be repaired or replaced. Original appliances may also be nearing the end of their serviceable life span.

## Very Old Homes (20 to 40 years)

The inspector should be looking carefully at the foundation when a home reaches this age. Movement is also possible in the floors, walls, and ceilings. Major systems and components, such as HVAC and roofing, may need to be replaced. Attention should also be paid to the electrical and plumbing fixtures, which will be showing their age.

## Historic and Architecturally Significant Homes

Historic homes may contain significant structural problems. The construction techniques used in these dwellings may be outdated as well. Fireplaces may no longer be safely operational, while mortar may be failing. Common problems with older homes include settling, binding doors, inadequate electrical and heating components, inadequate insulation, and inoperable windows. A home inspector may find the need for extensive and expensive repair, upgrades, and restoration. 🏠 🏠 🏠

This newsletter contains basic information on the home and general topics of interest. Due to the variations in homes, individual recommendations require a comprehensive evaluation. To reprint any article in this newsletter, please contact our office. © 1996-2003. All rights reserved. (ISND03)

## Stoffer Inspections, L.C. Information

Dave Stoffer provides technically superior inspections and is able to explain them all to clients on the most common terms. Stoffer Inspections, L.C. provides 3-D computer-generated narrative reports, that are both quick and comprehensive. My service also provides digital photography services for complete record keeping. Each home inspection includes and evaluation of roofing, electrical, heating, air conditioning, built-in appliances that stay with the home, plumbing, and visual structure.

Dave is a certified member of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), the Great Plains Chapter of ASHI, and the Kansas City area Pro ASHI Chapter. To obtain certification, member must perform a minimum of 250 home inspections and pass a series of written tests that cover both mechanical and structural aspects of a home. Once certified, member must maintain at least 40 hours of continuing education every two years. All of these requirements ensure that your clients will receive a thorough, experienced, ethical, and knowledgeable home inspection.



Certified Member of the  
American Society of Home Inspectors

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Meet Your Home  
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